



M E M O R A N D U M

Austin Police Department Forensic Science Services

TO: Bill Gibbens, Division Manager
FROM: Tony Arnold, Quality Assurance Manager
DATE: August 15, 2008
SUBJECT: 2008 Annual Internal Audit

The Austin Police Department Forensic Services Division conducted its annual internal ASCLD/LAB accreditation audit and FBI DNA Audit during the month of July, 2008. The ASCLD/LAB audit was conducted by Tony Arnold, Elizabeth Morris, Ralph Salazar, Toby Cross and Ian Farrell. Two auditors were assigned to each section. The DNA section audit was performed in conjunction with the FBI/DNA audit performed by Cassie Carradine, DNA Supervisor.

The audit consisted of examining the lab utilizing the 145 criteria located in the ASCLD/LAB accreditation guidelines as well as the FBI DNA audit document.

The Laboratory was found to be non-compliant to the following standards. The standards, the specific issue and the remediation to take place are listed below.

Standard: 1.4.1.4 **Is evidence protected from loss, cross transfer, contamination and/or deleterious change?**

Rating: Essential

Issue: **Chemistry Section:**

- Unsealed evidence in the vent hood may not be protected from loss, cross transfer, contamination and/or deleterious change

Remedy: All evidence has been properly labeled and packaged. No detrimental effect is noted. This was an isolated incident and does not reflect a systemic problem.

Standard: 1.4.2.10 **Does the laboratory routinely check the reliability of its reagents?**

Rating: Essential

Issue: **Chemistry Section:**

- Section SOP requires that presumptive test reagents be checked monthly. Some reagents were not checked from January to June 2008.



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Remedy: Reinforce policy within the section. There is no adverse impact to quality, as the reagents were still working properly when tested in June 2008. No results were reported based exclusively on the results of these reagents. Recheck for 90 days to verify compliance with section sop's.

Standard: 1.4.2.13 Are the instruments/equipment properly calibrated?

Rating: Essential

Issue: **Chemistry Section:**

- Laboratory sop's require balances checked for accuracy when moved from one location to another. No entries in the log book to indicate the move or accuracy check.
- Laboratory sop's require annual check of standard weights. No corresponding documents were located to indicate this task was performed.
- FTIR AHR0700751 serial number: The ValPro report serial number does not match the instrument.

Remedy:

- This is being addressed. Since in new location, the balance has been checked and is within acceptable range.
- New log page is being created to address this issue. It will note the scale on which these weights were weighed on after that scales has been yearly certified by an outside agency.
- Manufacturer has been contacted. We can not change the configuration of the Val-Pro report. This occurred after a service in electronic hardware by the manufacturer on 2-2008. They are going to call us back to see if we will be able to change this or if we will have to have a service call. There is no question that the Val-Pro report is associated with this instrument.

Issue: **Firearms Section:**

- The sound meter is out of calibration. Documentation with the meter indicates the calibration is valid for one year.

Remedy: The sound meter has not been used for any casework since expiration of the calibration certificate. The equipment will remain out of service until the calibration of the instrument is performed. A purchase order has been submitted for this service.

Issue: **Crime Scene Section:**

- The Dickens Thermometer was last calibrated in 2005.
- The section sop's indicate the balance accuracy must be checked every three months. The section log book indicates this schedule has not been met.
- No maintenance log was located for the CA fume hood as required in the section sop's, p 21.
- No maintenance log was located for digital imaging as required in the section sop's, p 22.



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- The maintenance log for the electrostatic dust lifter does not contain the information required by the section sop's, p 25.

Remedy:

- The Dickson TC200 thermometer must be verified for accuracy every two years and was deficient. The thermometer was verified for accuracy with no discrepancies noted and has not been used for field analysis since the initial verification lapsed in October 2007.
- The balance check will be amended in the Crime Scene SOP's to require accuracy verification be performed once every year by an outside vendor.
- The CA fume hood is checked for functionality each year by the building maintenance manager. A log page has been initiated to note possible future occurrences of repairs and/or corrective action.
- The "digital capture stations" consists of a computer and a camera and does not require a maintenance log page. This requirement will be removed from the Crime Scene SOP's.
- The electrostatic dust print lifter log and the Crime Scene SOP's will be reworded to require only a function check be performed every six months.

Standard: **1.4.2.22** **Does the laboratory have, use and document a system of technical review of the reports to ensure that the conclusions of its examiners are reasonable and within the constraints of scientific knowledge?**

Rating: **Essential**

Issue: **Crime Scene Section**

- The section sop's require that three reports per month are technically reviewed for property crime technicians. Not all PC techs have three cases reviewed per month for the months of August 2007 through July 2008.

Remedy:

- Reports requiring technical review, which did not receive the review, have been identified, reviewed and documented. No systemic problems were discovered.

Issue: **Latent Print Section**

- The section sop's require 100% of murder, aggravated robbery and sexual assault cases receive technical review. Not all cases in these categories received technical review.

Remedy:

- SOP's are being updated to reflect that information only reports are not subject to technical review. Information only reports convey case information not related to analysis, and are considered administrative documents rather than examination documents.



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- Reports requiring technical review, which did not receive the review, have been identified and will be reviewed and documented. Any systemic problems which surface will be addressed.

Standard: 1.4.3.4 **Does the laboratory conduct proficiency testing using re-examination or blind techniques?**

Rating: **Important**

Issue: Re-examination or blind testing is not practiced within the Division.

Remedy: No action necessary

Standard: 2.6.1 **Does each examiner possess a baccalaureate degree with science courses?**

Rating: **Important**

Issue: Firearms Section:

- Not all examiners within the Firearms Section possess a baccalaureate degree.

Remedy: No action necessary

Standard: 2.8.1 **Does each examiner possess a baccalaureate degree with science courses?**

Rating: **Important**

Issue: Latent Print Section:

- Not all examiners possess a baccalaureate degree.

Remedy: No action necessary

Standard: 3.4.8 **Are sufficient first-aid kits available and strategically located?**

Rating: **Important**

Issue: Forensic Division
The first aid kits need to be restocked and ensure the kits have working latches to contain the items. A second kit should be added near the south eyewash of the chemistry lab.

Remedy: First aid kit contents are on order and will be distributed when received.



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Standard: 3.4.9 Does the laboratory have an adequate number of personnel holding current certification in first-aid?

Rating: Important

Issue: None of the forensic division personnel hold current first aid certification.

Remedy: Training for an adequate number of personnel is being scheduled through the Department Safety Division. This training is to be completed as soon as possible and all sections and shifts will be represented to ensure a proper distribution of trained staff within the facility.

The internal FBI DNA audit was also conducted during this inspection. There were no findings to report within the DNA section.

